



# Collegial Circle Final

Please type in the information on this form, print it and send it to the Teacher Center along with the Collegial Circle copies in the check list below. Also, attach it to an email to Catherine Thomas to share in the Teacher Center's online Collegial Circle Archive. Thank you for being a part in the effort to improve teaching and learning for our students.

## COLLEGIAL CIRCLE INFORMATION

Title of Circle: **Rigor and Authenticity in the Middle School English Curriculum** Standards Area: ELA  
Facilitator: Lenore McPherson School(s): CRMS  
Beginning Date: 10/16/14 Ending Date: 1/29/15 # of Hours: 6  
Participants (list): Lenore McPherson, Laura Coughlin, Jessica Wojcik, Betsy Parke, David Burrirt, Lisa Riley, Jerry Eckert, Liesa Ehrlich

Please attach copies of the following to this report:

- ✓ Collegial Circle Attendance Log (required for payment)
- ✓ Collegial Circle Meeting Log
- ✓ Log of Strategies Implemented
- ✓ Samples of implementation strategies or student work samples if applicable
- ✓ Collegial Circle Reflection Sheets (each member fills one out)

## COLLEGIAL CIRCLE DESCRIPTION

(Type your answer in the grey box below the question. The size of the box will adjust to the length of your answer.)

### What were the anticipated objectives of this Circle?

- \*Gain an understanding of what authentic and rigorous learning would look like
- \*Look at ways to modify or add to curriculum to enhance both rigor and authenticity
- \*Perhaps return to the classroom to try something new

### What grade level(s) and or subject area(s) would benefit from this Circle?

ELA – 6,7,8

## FINAL REFLECTIONS

(Type your answer in the grey box below the question.)

### Was the outcome/goal of this Collegial Circle met? Explain.

Yes, the goals were met. This circle was really an exploration of the topics of rigor and authenticity. Through sharing articles, observations, and experiences, teachers came away with a greater understanding and some ways to look at their teaching differently.

### How did the Collegial Circle assess whether the outcome was met?

We assessed mainly through our discussion. We returned to our objectives each meeting and updated each on our changing thinking. We also left with changes to existing units that will "pump up" both authenticity and rigor. Eventually this work may lead to revising the curriculum, but for now we can only change those things that are not required, but optional.

### How did your work impact teaching/learning? Include student work samples, lesson plans, peer reviews, etc.

I think we have all tweaked assignments, sometimes subtly, to add in those elements that lead to rigor and authenticity. We have all been designing writing prompts with more choice and more guidance about how to design or come up with a question. Betsy, Lisa, and Laura experimented with a more open ended paragraph prompt and learned that students do need scaffolding to be successful with more open ended tasks. Giving choice is not enough, especially at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level. In 7<sup>th</sup> grade research, we focused on a more inquiry based approach with the hope that a more authentic research question would result in more engagement in the research. At the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, both David and Jerry are working on questioning. What kinds of questions can be asked that result in rigorous thought rather than recall? This is apparent in their research projects as well as in their approach to class discussion.

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**Comments/additional information to share.**

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